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EDUCATION

Protesters gather at critical race theory presentation on Park Point

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Around 30 people attended the controversial event in Duluth, while around 40 people showed up to protest it.

Written By: [Teri Cadeau](#) | 10:43 pm, Jul. 13, 2021



70°

After four attempts to bring its "Raise Our Standards" event to Duluth, the Center of the American Experiment presented its program on pushing back against critical race theory to an audience of about 30 inside the Lafayette Community Center on Tuesday, June 13. Outside, a gathering of about 40 protesters showed their disapproval of the event.

Four different locations including the Northland Country Club, the Holiday Inn and Suites Duluth, the AAD Shrine Event Center and the Cast Iron Bar and Grill canceled the event before it shifted to the community center on Park Point. It was originally scheduled to take place on June 17 in the middle of the organization's 17-city speaking tour, which wrapped up June 30.

Critical race theory is a framework developed by legal scholars in the 1970s as a response to persisting evidence of racism in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s. It examines the enduring legacies of racism in the U.S.

Before the event, protesters gathered along Minnesota Avenue with flags and signs promoting racial justice. One of the organizers of the protest, Sam Nelson of Superior, said she was there as a parent of two girls.



Protesters engage an attendee of a public meeting hosted by the Center of the American Experiment about critical race theory at Lafayette Community Center on Tuesday, July 13, 2021, in Duluth. (Clint Austin / caustin@duluthnews.com)

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"I think the U.S. has a really bad track record of telling the truth and whitewashing history," Nelson said. "We leave a lot of important things out when we teach our kids. It's important for me to teach my kids the truth and for them to understand why things are the way they are so they can make the changes necessary to make the world a more equitable place."

Protesters moved from Minnesota Avenue to the stairs outside of the venue while the presentation got underway at 5:30 p.m. A few police officers were stationed inside and a few more arrived when protesters grew a little loud at points throughout the presentation.

PREVIOUSLY:

- [Critical race theory debate makes its way to Carlton County](#)
- [Stauber tweets out against critical race theory](#)

Kendall Qualls, former Minnesota Congressional candidate and founder of TakeCharge, claimed the disintegration of the family, especially for Black Americans, is responsible for a lot of the issues in today's society.

"Are there racists out there in this country? You bet. But is America a racist country? Emphatically no," Qualls said.



Kendall Qualls, former Minnesota Congressional candidate and founder of TakeCharge, speaks at a

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Qualls argued that teaching critical race theory in schools “devalues the progress that has been made in the country over generations” and that whole families with two parents is what makes a greater difference when bridging the gap between disparities.

Then John Hinderaker presented the center’s views on critical race theory.

“Those knuckleheads outside would call us racist for talking about this, which is ironic because this presentation that I’m about to present to you was created by Catrin Wigfall who is married to a Black man,” Hinderaker said.

Normally the presentation given by Hinderaker is presented by Catrin Wigfall of the Center of the American Experiment, but as she is currently seven months pregnant, Hinderaker gave the presentation in her stead.


He argued that critical race theory is not “just an academic discipline but a way to fundamentally transform the way children are taught about our society.”

 John Hinderaker, the president of the Center of the American Experiment, speaks at a public meeting about critical race theory at Lafayette Community Center on Tuesday, July 13, 2021, in Duluth. (Clint Austin / caustin@duluthnews.com)

John Hinderaker, the president of the Center of the American Experiment, speaks at a public meeting about critical race theory at Lafayette Community Center on Tuesday, July 13, 2021, in Duluth. (Clint Austin / caustin@duluthnews.com)

As Hinderaker presented, a few people in the room mumbled under their breath in disagreement to some of his points. One such person was UMD student Tom Julstrom of St. Cloud. Julstrom said he attended the meeting to hear what the organization was saying about the topic.

“It was a remarkable misrepresentation of a number of things,” Julstrom said. “I’m just flabbergasted at the amount of fairly straightforward facts that they’ve wrapped up and twisted to suit their message. But it was a fun way to spend an afternoon.”

 Park Point resident Kate Horvath hangs large flags on a fence outside of a public meeting on critical race theory hosted by the Center of the American Experiment at Lafayette Community Center on Tuesday, July 13, 2021, in Duluth. (Clint Austin / caustin@duluthnews.com)

Park Point resident Kate Horvath hangs large flags on a fence outside of a public meeting on critical race theory hosted by the Center of the American Experiment at Lafayette Community Center on Tuesday, July 13, 2021, in Duluth. (Clint Austin / caustin@duluthnews.com)

Greg Cooper of Duluth also attended the event to hear what the organization had to say, and sided

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children learn. It seems like a pretty radical shift from what I was taught back in the day and it breaks my heart to learn about it.”

Some states have introduced legislation banning public schools from promoting critical race theory, including six that have enacted laws. Last month, the Minnesota Department of Education addressed

the topic in a statement to the News Tribune, which starts by saying critical race theory isn't included in the state's K-12 academic standards, or in any proposed ones.

The event wrapped up around 6:30, and protesters remained in place along the exit as attendees made their way out.

A more in-depth analysis of the presentation by the Center of the American Experiment is slated for publication later this week.



1 / 6 Kendall Qualls, former Minnesota Congressional candidate and founder of TakeCharge, speaks at a public meeting about critical race theory and how people can fight against it being taught to their children in school at Lafayette Community Center on Tuesday, July 13, 2021, in Duluth. (Clint Austin / caustin@duluthnews.com)

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EDUCATION

Duluth School Board approves sale of Central High School for \$7.4 million

Central High School, located  at 800 Central Entrance, has finally been sold, 10 years after the school closed for good. The high school building will be demolished for \$2 million by the district. The secondary technical center, shown left of the track, will remain with the hope of reusing it. (Steve Kuchera / 2021 file / News Tribune)


EDUCATION

Crowd protests 'government speech,' critical race theory at Rochester School Board meeting

Audience members pray after  public comments were concluded during a Rochester Public Schools School Board meeting Tuesday, July 13, 2021, at the school district's Edison Administration Building in Rochester. A group of people opposed to critical race theory and masking to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 filled the audience during the public comment portion of the meeting. (Joe Ahlquist / (jahlquist@postbulletin.com)

EDUCATION

Satellites from the mothership? UND professors say UFOs that buzzed US warship need more study

Sherry Fieber-Beyer, assistant  professor of space studies at UND, believes it's possible that unidentified aerial phenomenon that have been tracked by the U.S. Navy are alien in origin. Photo by Eric Hylden/Grand Forks Herald

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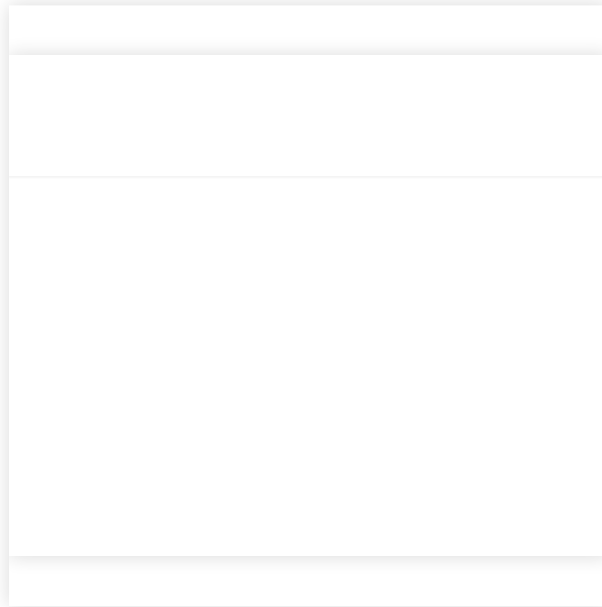
WALZ TOURS BENEFITS OF SUMMER SCHOOL LEARNING

Commissioner Heather Mueller, right, offers encouragement at Denfeld High School in Duluth on Tuesday, July 13, 2021. Walz reported the time to Denfeld student Lilly Aleshire, who was calculating acceleration as part of a summer school physical science class. (Samantha Erkkila (/ serkkila@duluthnews.com

EDUCATION

AmeriCorps seeks reading, math tutors in Duluth area

AmeriCorps is in need of reading and math tutors to work with students in the Duluth-area schools. (Photo courtesy of Minnesota Reading and Math (Corps



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